

**UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AND HEALTH MANUAL
HOT ITEMS**

May 8, 2002

PREFACE

During the past number of years, roadway construction has become the most dangerous construction-related workplace. During 2000, roadway construction related deaths increased nationwide by approximately 25% to 1,150 fatalities.

Under the general duty clause of the OSHA Construction Safety Standard, 29 CFR 1926, owners of projects and construction companies are obligated to review industry trends and their own specific risks and make pro-active changes to protect their workers.

The OSHA Construction Standard, 29 CFR 1926, is the least acceptable safety standard written for those owners and contractors, who because of limited ability or perspective, are unable or unwilling to take additional pro-active steps to protect life.

The following UDOT focus issues are important to us as we manage safety on UDOT projects.

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I. ROLL OVER PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES (ROPS) AND SEATBELTS

UDOT is committed to the strict use of seat belts in all equipment. All equipment with ROPS is required to have operational seat belts. Workers operating equipment or vehicles in the UDOT right of way or on UDOT projects are required to use seatbelts 100% of the time.

UDOT has had many near misses with 22 or more old “in-house” compactors without ROPS. During 2000, UDOT Risk Managers banned all UDOT compactors not equipped with ROPS and voted to ban equipment without ROPS from working on UDOT projects. Over the past five years, UDOT contractors using non-ROPS equipment have had several devastating accidents resulting in permanent disability and culminating in a 1999 fatality. In this fatal incident, construction workers removed the ROPS from a compactor which then rolled and decapitated the young operator.

OSHA and MSHA summarize heavy equipment accidents which total about 250 fatalities and thousands of disabling accidents every year. Sadly, if equipment had ROPS and seatbelts were worn, nearly all of the fatalities and serious injuries could have been prevented.

II. COWBOY HARD HATS

Cowboy hard hats are banned from all UDOT projects.

Hard hats are a symbol of construction as well as a protective device. They are used to protect against head injury.

The brim of a normal hard hat is sloped downward. It is designed to deflect objects falling from above the head off of the head. By virtue of the cowboy hard hat's upswept brim, items falling from above the head are not deflected. Energy is then trapped wrenching or twisting the neck when items strike the brim.

Cowboy hard hats are a novelty item and have come to reflect a non-conformist attitude prevalent among some construction workers. UDOT cannot afford to have workers willing to take risks.

If an increase in sun protection is desired, wide brim hard hats with sun drapes are available and recommended.

III. REFLECTORIZATION

All equipment and storage trailers or secured storage boxes must be reflectorized.

The first paragraph of the equipment standard in OSHA 29 CFR 1926.600 (A) addresses the critical need to have lights, barricades or reflectors to mark equipment left on or near a roadway which drivers might potentially strike for whatever reason including while driving in a closed traffic area or off the roadway.

After recent fatalities, UDOT wants to make checking for reflectorization a minimum standard during project safety inspections.

IV. PRE-SHIFT WRITTEN INSPECTIONS

For more than 40 years Federal Government Agencies such as Hill Field have required that contractors with heavy equipment had to have pre-shift safety inspections. Over the years, most good contractors and owners, such as Kennecott, have demanded that equipment undergo pre-shift safety inspections. All systems are given a thorough operator check-off. Window glass cannot have cracks, mud, etc. to distract the operator or limit visibility.

V. IMPALEMENT PROTECTION

All rebar protection must meet the new ANSI standard of protecting workers from a 10 foot fall at 250 pounds of weight. Only metal cup embedded plastic-covered caps meet that standard for use on UDOT projects. The use of mushroom caps to protect against worker and public impalement is unacceptable.

Protection is required where someone could fall onto or into vertical or horizontal bent bar or imbeds in concrete.

During the past three years, workers on UDOT projects have slipped on rebar causing it to stab various parts of their bodies, including a hand, a thigh and a calf.

VI. GENERAL CONTRACTOR'S DUTY TO ENFORCE SUBCONTRACTOR SAFETY

The general contractor is directly responsible for safety enforcement of their subcontractors on a UDOT construction project.

All safety audits assess the aggregate safety violations of their subcontractors against the general contractor. Contractor safety managers need to pay constant attention to the actions of their subcontractors.

While safety managers have long been required by UDOT contract, there is a new emphasis upon contractor safety managers actively meeting that requirement and assuming the contractor's rightful responsibility to track and enforce project safety for all contract and subcontract employees.